In The Specification

Please amend paragraph [0002] as follows:

[0002] As a rule, the sulphur components contained in the raw natural gas have to be removed to obtain a residual content of only a few ppm to permit further industrial utilization of the natural gas. The removal of hydrogen sulphide, mercaptanes, carbon dioxide and other sour gas constituents from industrial gases is generally performed with the aid of chemically acting absorbents, such as amino solutions, alkali salt solutions, etc. or physically acting, chemically non-active absorbents, such as Selexol, propylene carbonate, N-methyl pyrrolidone, Morphysorb, methanol, etc. in loop systems, the physically acting absorbents (as opposed to chemical scrubbing agents) being capable of removing organic sulphur components. In this process, the carbon dioxide contained in the gas is removed partially, totally or only in a portion as little as possible, depending on the requirements and specifications.

Please amend paragraph [0007] as follows:

[0007] The invention solves the problem described by the following steps:

• a portion of sour gas is ~~separated~~ removed from the first natural gas stream that contains sour gas;

• the sour gas portion removed from the first natural gas stream is shifted to at least one additional sour gas separation unit;

• the feed operation <u>to the further sour gas separation unit</u> is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream is mixed to at least one second natural gas stream and that this mixture is piped to <u>the</u> ~~at least one~~ further sour gas separation unit.

Please amend paragraph [0011] as follows:

[0011] In an embodiment of the process in accordance with the present invention, the separation of the sour gas contained in the first natural gas stream is effected by absorption as follows:

• The sour gas portion to be separated is removed from the first natural gas stream, using a chemically <u>non-</u>active adsorbent;

• the laden absorbent is recycled to the head of a desorption unit;

• the sour gas ~~desorpted~~ <u>desorbed</u> by and leaving the desorption unit is admixed to a second natural gas stream.

Please insert the following new paragraph following paragraph [0016]:

The process for shifting sour gas portions contained in a natural gas (1) from a first sour gas separation unit (2) to at least two or more further sour gas separation units (22) with free capacities in accordance with the invention as described herein, can also be operated when:

- the sour gas (20) removed from the first natural gas stream is fed to at least two or more further sour gas separation units, and

- the feed operation to the further sour gas separation units is effected in such a manner that the sour gas removed from the first natural gas stream (20) is mixed with at least two or more natural gas streams and that these mixtures are piped to the two or more further sour gas separation units.

Please amend paragraph [0019] as follows:

[0019] The withdrawal of part stream 3 and the admixture of the freed natural gas 6 may take place in the same section, a fact illustrated by the dashed line in the diagram. It is also possible to send the complete first natural gas stream 1 into the absorption column so that the withdrawal of a part stream and the re-admixture of the latter can be omitted. The crucial criterion is that natural gas 7 thus obtained matches to the extent possible the rated capacity of sour gas separation unit with Claus plant 2, a plant section that ensures that the sour gas is converted to sulphur 8 and that purified natural gas 9 is ~~sent~~ fed to product natural gas pipeline 10.

Please amend paragraph [0022] as follows:

[0022] Mixture 20 of the sour gas and natural gas is admixed to a second natural gas stream 21 the sour gas content of which does not reach the capacity of the related sour gas separation unit with Claus plant 22. This mode shifts a minor concentrated sour gas stream into natural gas line 23, which merely causes a very slight increase in the total stream volume in this line. Hence, the conveying capacity of natural gas line 23 as well as the processing capacity of the sour gas separation unit with Claus plant 22 are

better exploited. The sour gas separation unit with Claus plant 22 ensures that the sour gas is converted to sulphur 24 and that purified natural gas 25 is ~~sent~~ fed to product natural gas pipeline 10.